We can no longer ignore the potential of psychedelic drugs to treat depression (theguardian.com)

338 points by throwaway888abc 1 day ago | hide | past | web | favorite | 226 comments

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mettamage 1 day ago [–]

In all honesty, mushrooms, weed and alcohol taught me one thing.

Do I *like* being simply sober!

I prefer my mental quickness and sharpness over anything. When I smoke weed, I lose my English (lol) and only speak Dutch. When I take shrooms, I don't even dare to get off the bed. Hell, I don't even know what a bed is! And when I'm drunk, that's just a horrible feeling, *while* I'm drunk. I'm actually much more fine with a hangover, since I'm already more mentally sharp then (with a huge headache).

Drugs are fun to debug your brain with, but ultimately:

- Sex

- Exercise

- Meditation

- Yoga

- The Wim Hof Method

- Amazing food

That's my favorite type of drugs.

With that said, if you prefer to take drugs, by all means: go ahead ;-)

Full disclaimer: weed on a very light dose (Dutch weed though) and MDMA can be exceptions to this on very rare occassions, according to some people I know. They can be relationship enhancing (friends or SO) in the right setting.

reply

teataster 1 day ago [–]

Every time I took mushrooms, it felt like everything went in HD, no mental hinderance (as compared to say alcohol or weed) and even increased creativity/critical thinking. Good ol' college days. Is it possible that you might have taken a bit to big of a dose for your "abilities"?

Not trying to debate your point or take any validity away from anything you said, I am 66% with you. Just curious about your thoughts, since we seem to have had a different experience in that case.

reply

mettamage 1 day ago [–]

A few times yea and a few times no. I think the bigger the dose, the more dangerous my behavior became. The lightest dose I had made me feel like a 10 year old kid. *That* was interesting.

So there’s definitely something to it.

The same goes for alcohol and weed.

Now that I think about it more sharply, my favorite doses:

- alcohol: 1 to 3 glasses

- weed (Dutch): 1 to 3 puffs

- truffles (Dutch as sold in smartshops): half a standard dose sold

Thanks for making me more aware on this. I was only hyper aware of this with weed. Too much weed always makes me feel I’m dying. The first few times I had that, I even believed it.

While too much mushrooms or alcohol are no joke either, the experiences were more positive (mixed in with a lot of less positive things).

reply

xz0r 23 hours ago [–]

> Too much weed makes me feel I'm dying.

You should try a strain with less THC and more CBD. More THC will lead to anxiety. The feeling that you're dying is quite common at high THC (for people who smoke rarely), but once you know how to "deal" with it, it opens up some experiences which are quite hard to put in words, but are quite enjoyable. A lot of it depends on the "set" and "setting". Without right setting (or music), I'm sure it would lead to racing thoughts and paranoid feelings.

reply

emptyfile 1 day ago [–]

Mushrooms are the only drug which reliably produced bad trips every time I took them. 0 pros in comparison to LSD.

reply

tartoran 1 day ago [–]

It doesn’t sound you’re suffering from depression though. If you’re healthy stay that way. Some people need help and psychedelics can provide the answer

reply

mettamage 1 day ago [–]

My point always is: they can. I’ve experienced the awesome interconnectedness of psilocybin. But they can also leave you in a state where you might become suicidal on the spot. And since we didn’t have a tripsitter that became an issue.

It’s experiences like those that I realized that I like being sober.

But I agree they can, especially with more professional guidance. If anything, those people are sober and a tripsitter is a necessity.

reply

twic 1 day ago [–]

I've tried yoga and salvia once each, and i much preferred the salvia.

Where i live, weed is usually the narcotic, body-high type that makes you sit there quietly in an anaesthetised stupor - stereotypical indica. I don't enjoy that all. But occasionally, you come across the head-high type that makes you energetic and giggly - the stereotypical sativa. That's really good fun! It's like the best parts of being drunk, without some of the downsides.

reply

AlecSchueler 1 day ago [–]

How man sessions of yoga did you try, literally just the one? The benefits of yoga really come when you practice regularly in a sustained way and you get to know the poses and can feel how your body reacts differently each time you go into them, when you learn how not to hold tension, when you learn to follow the breath and when you learn to accept and trust your body's limits and strengths.

To me it's someone saying they tried therapy for one session and didn't feel any benefit!

reply

kungato 5 hours ago [–]

Do you have a recommendation on how to self study yoga?

reply

mettamage 4 hours ago [–]

Well, I said yoga, but I actually mean stretching. I'm making myself more supple to enjoy yoga more when I'm more familiar with stretching in general.

reply

hkai 1 day ago [–]

That's interesting because quite a lot of people on reddit seem to believe that drugs is the only fun thing to do in life, and the rest is horrifying - work, money, relationship problems, housing and so on.

Perhaps that's why governments try to ban drugs: because given a chance, most people would prefer NOT to stay sober, except for few exceptional individuals.

reply

mettamage 1 day ago [–]

I am changing my attitude on it by asking relentlessly: how is this fun?

For work the answer is: a 4 day work week helps a shit ton. I am free on Wednesday. So if I dread the workday then I am free the next day or the day after that which puts me at ease. Also, then when I *am* free, I am noticing that I don’t like the day much more. That gives me a powerful perspective to not blame work for when I feel unhappy.

Also, my work feels kind of easy. CRUD apps are not tje difficult beasts I studied during college.

It also helps that the founders guard work-life balance.

reply

tarsinge 1 day ago [–]

I don't think that most people would prefer not to stay sober. Given my experience it really depends of your age. 22 years old me would have laughed if I said that I now prefer to spend times with my friend playing board games in the afternoon instead of just drinking all night. I see a lot of people in my circles that were heavy drinkers in their 20's and now in their 30's are naturally drifting towards enjoying other things more. The catch is to not cross the line to addiction during that time, and here being middle/upper class makes the difference because it usually means your life is mostly on tracks (like having a job), with positive social pressure from friends and family to go too far. Not everyone has the chance to have that.

reply

trianglem 1 day ago [–]

Well anything involved with traditionally working for a living is hellish to this generation (myself included). Given a choice I would wake up and do what I wanted that morning which usually is productive but not always and there’s no requirement it should be. But what are you going to do, work makes society run so we must do it.

reply

LargoLasskhyfv 1 day ago [–]

Then that stuff is not for your metabolism, or too strong/too much. I can relate to that, because alcohol is usually just a downer for me, but sometimes that can be ok, especially when one does not know what a hangover is.

Regarding the weed, ONE small piece the size of a matchhead/pin-head can make me different for 2 to 3 days, turning into some overdrive mode. Even when worked into a slim cigarette with extra long 2cm filter with 6mm diameter. *That* is insane!

Extasy i liked very much decades ago, but abstained from it because of too much "russian roulette".

Sex i couldn't care less, my cats give me all the cuddling i need.

Exercise? I bicycle and walk all year around during all weather.

Meditation, Yoga? Don't care.

Food? Don't care that much. Like to abuse mild Sri Racha (green cap) on everything :)

edit: Ah, forgot Shrooms. Would like to have them more often! And anything else with the reputation of expanding consciousness. But again, in a safe way, without russian roulette.

reply

mettamage 1 day ago [–]

Haha, cats are a better answer indeed! ;-)

I agree with the Russian roulette feel.

reply

colecut 1 day ago [–]

Can you elaborate on what makes ecstacy like Russian roulette?

reply

LargoLasskhyfv 1 day ago [–]

The uncertainty of origin, possible manipulation/adulteration, total lack of traceable quality control. As with anything black-market related to drugs.

edit: When you are not in the 'scene/subculture', and therefore don't have networks. And even then it's a matter of trust, or dislike of involvement of those networks into things which you'd rather not like to be connected with.

reply

goatsi 1 day ago [–]

That's no longer a problem these days, buy some powder/crystalline MDMA and then send it off to a testing laboratory such as https://www.ecstasydata.or…. Many European countries even have free testing services you can use. I would recommend getting powder because that way you can know your exact dose, another problem with getting pills.

reply

LargoLasskhyfv 1 day ago [–]

I'm too lazy for that, and too wary. I'd like to be able to simply buy it in the doses i want, without prescription or any further (possible) hassle. On demand.

reply

goatsi 1 day ago [–]

>I'd like to be able to simply buy it in the doses i want, without prescription or any further (possible) hassle. On demand.

Have you heard of darknet markets?

reply

LargoLasskhyfv 1 day ago [–]

Sure? Have you understood traceable quality control, on demand, and possible hassle?

edit: Anyways, nice site, thx, bookmarked just in case.

reply

goatsi 1 day ago [–]

Expect to wait 15-20 years if you want liquor store style service.

reply

LargoLasskhyfv 1 day ago [–]

Did. Can do so again. CAN'T be caught with it atm. Shit happens.

reply

ArtWomb 1 day ago [–]

Just curious. In the coffeeshops in Amsterdam, are electronic vape products and edibles becoming more prevalent? Or is it still mostly flower culture. Where the primary method of consumption is the long cone joint or "spliff", generously mixed with some fine tobacco...

reply

mettamage 1 day ago [–]

I am the wrong person to ask.

Let me put it this way:

50 y/o people look at me weird when I say that I smoke a pure joint.

Edibles, don’t fully know. I do know that people that don’t like to smoke take them.

reply

dwaltrip 1 day ago [–]

While your post is interesting (albeit mostly anecdotal), it doesn’t seem like you are responding to the main substance of the article.

reply

mettamage 1 day ago [–]

True, sorry for that. I responded to the title and to the comments.

I feel people are a bit too hyped about this and since I have used stuff like this to help me with my mental state, I hoped that my comment might be interesting food for thought.

My opinion feels a bit like a counter comment to what I read in the comment section. Since it was so different, I felt the need to make it.

Apologies for not responding to the main article. I support drugs research though. It’s silly that we as a society don’t learn about all our tools, we should learn how to use them.

reply

firecall 1 day ago [–]

I just got bored. Bored with myself, with my own company.

It's a terrible way to live. Drinking too much :-(

reply

mettamage 1 day ago [–]

Probably won’t help but it might.

Is there any form of exercise you like? Get addicted to that. See how it compares to drugs and alcohol.

For me, my favorite type of (running with my favorite pumped up music) is remarkably similar to what people I know report when they are on MDMA, and I know these people virtually as well as I know myself.

Note: you don’t have to go all the way with exercise. Exercise is not about training your body. It’s about feeling good about moving.

Example: when I lift weights and feel not into it anymore then I do one more rep to see if the feeling stays. If it does, I stop.

Don’t exercise to train. Exercise because it *feels so damn good*. And the moment it doesn’t, then stop.

This line of reasoning is also applied to yoga. I am the stiffest person in the world, but I love my stretches because they feel good.

Do I improve? A bit but I care way more about performing healthy behaviors while feeling good. For me, it is the only sustainable way to be healthy.

reply

alexashka 1 day ago [–]

For many people - they don't really have the quickness you speak of and even if they do, they haven't found a way to apply it in a way that they enjoy.

The problem many people are fighting is boredom. Hence the prevalence of alcohol. It makes time go by, it turns off the brain that is largely capable of haphazard worrying and complaining.

For those who are smart enough to assemble hierarchies of meaning and play with them, sobriety is great. For most everyone else - regular drug use is probably an optimal strategy.

reply

mettamage 1 day ago [–]

That’s a very clear vivid picture. I find it very hard to imagine if I am honest. However, your comment made it a bit easier.

It sucks to live like that. I wish I could help. I’ll take a few minutes to see if there is some low hanging fruit. I know a few people quite close to me who fit this description.

reply

mulderc 1 day ago [–]

I would say that I struggled with depression for a good chunk of my life. Then I tried some psychedelic drugs, very low doses in a safe environment and things changed dramatically very quickly. It is as close to night and day difference I think I have ever experienced. I still have my issues but they are much more in line with just the challenges of life as compared to before when just getting out of bed was nearly impossible.

reply

lowdose 1 day ago [–]

Whats a low doses for you?

reply

brootstrap 1 day ago [–]

I am a stoner, decent weed tolerance and smoking just about daily. Took shrooms twice. one time was shwag shroomers that did nothing. Next time i ate one single shroom (not a big one either) . My buddy was there all fucked up like dude keep eating. Well i tripped balls for 6 hours including a phone call back home to my wife to get myself grounded haha.

reply

andai 1 day ago [–]

I've noticed there's a huge variation in tolerance to mushrooms, even among people who share a similar tolerance to other substances. Like an order of magnitude difference.

reply

heavenlyblue 1 day ago [–]

Um. You should never dose mushrooms in units of mushrooms - you must only shred all of them and then weight the same dosage.

reply

caymanjim 1 day ago [–]

While it's encouraging to see a relaxation of attitudes toward drugs in general, and some degree of acceptance by medical professionals, I take exception to the idea that professional head-shrinking is required for benefit. Some people are helped by clinical psychology and psychiatry. Many people would do well to avoid all psychoactive drugs without oversight and guidance from a trained professional. But many of us have been self-medicating for decades and we're well aware of the benefit of burning a joint after work or going on a canoe trip with some mushrooms. Such an approach is still stigmatized by many mental health professionals. It takes a huge ego to think you've got a monopoly on managing my mental state for me.

reply

phkahler 1 day ago [–]

>> It takes a huge ego to think you've got a monopoly on managing my mental state for me.

Funny because I though destruction of the ego was one of the requirements to achieve good mental health ;-)

Someone described their drug experience to me and said it was very important to have their trusted friend there to help ground them as needed and guide them through it. That guy is now ready to take on that role. Apparently going it alone at first is a really bad idea. Do you need a psychologist? Doubt it. They have their own issues.

reply

slfnflctd 1 day ago [–]

The phrase 'get a second opinion' applies tenfold to anything mental health related. Far too many practitioners are enamored of pseudoscience, have massive biases or are just trying to coast along the easiest possible path.

A good therapist can make a big difference, but I personally had to go through at least 5 before I found that one for me, and in discussions with others I've learned that my experience is not at all uncommon.

Part of the problem is that by the time a lot of people break through the perceived stigma of seeking help, they're so desperate and depleted of energy that they're willing to take the first thing offered without question rather than have to run the gauntlet. For anyone in a precarious position with regard to spare time & money, I would currently recommend against seeking professional help except in outlier situations. I hope to be able to change this position in the future-- there are at least some signs of positive change (such as the increasing acceptance of psychedelics and self-treatment).

reply

vokep 1 day ago [–]

It seems like a stepping stone. The idea of accepting that sort of full freedom is frightening to people not familiar with it. If a someone trained to evaluate mental health can be standing by saying "yes its worked, they've benefited" then its an easier pill to swallow for people who haven't been educated out of "this is your brain on drugs!"

reply

nappy-doo 1 day ago [–]

slightly offtopic:

I have struggled with anxiety. It's always been a low-level constant in my life with suicidal ideation and mild panic attacks. I have never treated it beyond irregular talk therapy and CBT.

The lockdown in the US and the safety of my family has triggered me severely. I found myself unable to function, and would doom surf, opening tabs, refreshing news, watching graphs move up and to the right. No thought, just monkey level reactions.

I started taking medical THC, and my life has changed for the better. I can focus. I can relax. I can live a normal life. I can approach the covid situation with thought, not gut level reaction.

All of this is to say, if the article's drugs work for some, they need to be available. Legal marijuana in my state has made a huge difference in my life -- if other psychotropics or psychedelics help others, then let's get them out there.

reply

mjayhn 1 day ago [–]

I feel bad for people that aren't in a pot-legal state during this. I've definitely added some munchie weight beyond my usual but I've barely drank a drop since April. If I hop on twitter it seems like one of the common conversations is drinking nightly, same with my colleagues.

I hope people with addiction problems are able to get support and help through this. If I hadn't moved here years ago I'd probably be right there with you and waking up like every day was groundhog day again.

Now I just need to flip this lazy-pot-smoking-time-spent back into a workout routine which will take about 3-4 weeks of me working out consistently to a strict habit for myself, motivation there is almost non-existent though. Thankfully I've gone through ups and downs with exercise so many times now that I know not doing it is self fulfilling prophecy and leads to no improvements.

now to just.. do it..

reply

rv-de 1 day ago [–]

> I found myself unable to function, and would doom surf, opening tabs, refreshing news, watching graphs move up and to the right. No thought, just monkey level reactions.

Are you trying to make fun of me?

reply

nappy-doo 1 day ago [–]

No, but it's how I recognized something was wrong with me. I recognized I wasn't me.

I'm not saying I need pot to be me, but I need a little help to get through this, and right now THC is helping me. I can be more patient with my family. I can let myself explore my work, and I am a little more relaxed to step back and look at my problems, and say, "I can fix these, let's start on this one."

If your reply isn't a joke, maybe you need to find your outlet. It doesn't have to be what I found, maybe yours is painting models, or writing a screenplay, or playing video games. I hope you find it.

reply

pureliquidhw 1 day ago [–]

"I can fix these, let's start with this one."

That's my new mantra. It sums up nicely what anxiety makes it hard to see.

reply

yazaddaruvala 1 day ago [–]

FWIW, I really liked learning about System 1 and System 2 thinking[0], based only on “No thought, just monkey level reactions” you might also enjoy reading more about it.

[0] https://en.m.wikipedia.org/…

reply

ohsonice 1 day ago [–]

I definitely think that we shouldn't be criminalizing drugs. I've had some good experiences and some bad experiences on both LSD and mushrooms and believe that they could be beneficial in medical settings under the right supervision. That being said, people are still going to have bad reactions sometimes. I would think that the benefits are better than the risks, especially compared to our current approach to medicating away depression.

My current view is that I can reach similar states of joy and grounding (including oxytocin release) through meditation, yoga, exercise, play, community, etc. I have been in groups where everyone is partaking in psychedelics - I choose not to and still have wonderful experiences. I think that the drugs taught me how to get to those states but there are not the only way.

The conspiracy theorist in me does not think that "the Man" wants us to be grounded and open in general, including through means of drugs.

reply

rwmj 1 day ago [–]

Does anyone know how (or if) they constructed a double-blind trial? The effects of mushrooms are easy to distinguish from a placebo to say the least.

reply

colechristensen 1 day ago [–]

You can't really do a double blind trial.

The therapy in question isn't replacing your prozac with magic mushrooms, it is a series of brief intense therapy sessions where the patient is given a dose and talked to while they are under the influence of the drug.

It's just really obvious to everyone involved whether the patent got psilocybin, LSD, or whatever else. Double blinds would work to an extent with dosages, but still limited.

You can't do a double blind study of the effects of lighting someone's hair on fire on their ability to solve math problems, that's about the realm of the situation here.

reply

PragmaticPulp 1 day ago [–]

Sure, but that's missing the point.

Researchers need to study therapy sessions compared to therapy sessions with psychedelics. If they have enough people, include a third arm with traditional antidepressant medication.

It's not blinded, but at least we would have data to compare to existing treatments. Double-blind isn't the only way to run a trial.

reply

colechristensen 1 day ago [–]

I wouldn't think it's missing the point, you have a different topic there.

And the A/B comparison doesn't have much room for common ground to control for. Perhaps not a single study comparing both, but separate studies (many) of different treatment methods and replications of those treatment methods and then meta-analysis studies on the whole lot. (and much of this already exists)

reply

qntty 1 day ago [–]

My understanding is that they achieve "double-blind" by giving everybody either a low dose or high dose. So everybody gets mushrooms, and the effect is based on the difference between a low dose and high dose. Experimenters don't know the dose that a subject gets, and subjects don't know that there is a difference in the dose they could get, so they can't try to guess what dose they got. It does tend to be obvious to the experimenters who got which dose when it kicks in though.

reply

young_unixer 1 day ago [–]

> subjects don't know that there is a difference in the dose they could get, so they can't try to guess what dose they got.

Do subjects really believe this?

"Even though most trials are done with placebo groups I'm sure this one will be different"

reply

▲ jes5199 1 day ago [–]

at least sometimes they've done blind experiments with an "active placebo" - give the subject something like Ritalin that makes you feel like you've taken a drug, but no psychedelic effect

reply

▲ tasty_freeze 1 day ago [–]

My understanding is that niacin is often used. It is a high enough dose to cause noticeable changes and flushing, but of course isn't psychoactive.

reply

▲ rubber_duck 1 day ago [–]

I mean haven't you ever had/heard about that guy who would describe what an amazing experience he had on drug X when someone gave him fake drugs.

It's easy to distinguish if you tried it, otherwise autosuggestion etc. could play it's part of you actually tell the placebo group you are giving them pshychodelics (not disclosing/mentioning placebo)

reply

▲ BurningFrog 1 day ago [–]

There are lots of psychedelic drugs, so you could at least compare them to each other.

Not that the FDA would allow that.

reply

▲ rv-de 1 day ago [–]

Michael Pollan writes in "How to change your Mind" that the placebo often is some drug which causes some mild dizziness - can't find the name of it.

reply

▲ Nbox9 1 day ago [–]

My understanding is none of this research is double-blind, and by the nature of what is studied it is impossible to conduct a double-blind study.

reply

▲ esotericsean 1 day ago [–]

I have anxiety and used to have REALLY bad anxiety. My girlfriend at the time encouraged me to try weed because it helped her. I was incredibly nervous and after just one inhalation I had one of the worst panic attacks of my life. It was as if I had no control at all.

I understand how psychedelics can help in theory, but man I'd be so freaking scared to even try them because I hate that feeling of losing control.

reply

▲ SirSavary 1 day ago [–]

It's important to reaffirm before, during, and after the trip that you're totally "normal" and going to stay "normal". In my experience a "bad trip" is an anxiety/panic attack through the lens of whatever drug you're on.

I've had success nearly 100% talking people down by engaging the panic and looking for the root cause. Most of the time it seems that people have some underlying anxiety that weed/hallucinogens bubble to the surface. They're suddenly and unexpectedly faced with a completely new manifestation of their fears.

"I thought weed was supposed to be fun? What do you mean it'll force me to think about my negative mental baggage???"

It can be overwhelming if someone isn't there to talk you through it and explain that it's completely normal.

reply

colordrops 1 day ago [–]

Avoiding addressing that feeling of losing control is analogous to an obese person afraid of exercise and diet. It will certainly help but is extremely difficult and painful to start.

reply

vcoelho 23 hours ago [–]

The first time I've used weed I had one too. I still do not enjoy weed. I've microdosing mushrooms and then I was way more relaxed when I took a large dose for the first time. I was scared in the begginning, and sensing an increase in my anxiety because my GF was watching me sober, then I excused myself and laid down on the bed, watching the sky with music on the earphones. I've concluded that I can't have a nice time with drugs having people with me.

reply

teataster 22 hours ago [–]

It is a common opinion of people not acquainted to mushrooms that you will loose control, as if all drugs had the same effect as weed or alcohol. Loosing control with mushrooms is associated to high doses or previous psychotic conditions.

reply

sibeliuss 1 day ago [–]

Periodic reminder that weed and psychedelics are _very_ different things, with different effects. One can't be compared to the other, though people sometimes describe "trippy" weed experiences. Each compound produces its own effect.

reply

brokenmachine 1 day ago [–]

Of course you can compare different things to each other.

That's what comparison is for.

reply

victoriasun 1 day ago [–]

I am a pretty experienced psychedelic user. It has been transformative in helping my mental health. I'm happy to answer any questions from people who are interested in using psychedelics to help break thru mental pain and trauma.

reply

nikivi 1 day ago [–]

Would be a nice world indeed if everyone tried psychedelics. Especially something like Salvia or DMT. As it wakes you up from the often 'mundane' life people are living. From personal experience it inspired me to want to explore this universe more.

reply

aero142 1 day ago [–]

There seems to be a large spread between how the person who used psychedelics describes their experience vs how it appears to me. It used to just be the people who were in to crystals and vibrations and other new age things, but I see it with most people who talk about the benefits of psychedelics. Very smart people claim to have learned profound things from their experiences but when they explain them, they sounds like nonsense to me. They common quality is that the experiences sound disconnected from reality. They try to explain the experience and are fully convinced they learned some fundamental truth but can't explain it in any way that makes sense. Like when you have an emotional reaction to a dream but when you explain the dream, you realize the literal description in nonsense. Perhaps disconnecting from reality a bit or internalizing a core belief that everything OK, even when it isn't, is a good thing for making you happy, but there seems to be a lot of downside in breaking critical thinking in a lot of people's heads.

I used to listen to Tim Ferris and Peter Attia, and thought they were both very logical thinkers, but since they started talking up the benefits of psychedelics, I keep getting that same feeling that what they are describing sounds more like trying to levitate the pentagon to end the war.

reply

AtHeartEngineer 1 day ago [–]

The best way I can describe it is, before you experience anything like that, you are only aware of the normal/sober extents that your mind uses, and afterwards you realize that most the dials/knobs/gradients/ups/downs you've experienced are only within a small threshold of what your brain is capable of. Experiencing that allows you to have a better understanding of where your thoughts/emotions/experience fall on those spectrums the rest of your life. It puts the range you normally operate into perspective.

Think of it as a kind of messy recalibration, a jostle of the box of your mind. Jostling your box occasionally can help you sometimes break through a local optima to a more global optima, shaking the fuck out of your brain all the time, well, it'll probably make you creative but no guarantees anyone else will understand you.

reply

vlasev 9 hours ago [–]

I think it's a pretty good analogy. I was experiencing a personal paradox of mine for over a year and no amount of writing or thinking about it helped. Then after a single experience with weed, the next day I was able to piece things together and resolve this paradox. It's been about 9 months since and the solution still holds up to my own scrutiny. I believe this would not have been possible without the weed. It's funny how a single day can help you resolve something that bothered you for hundreds of days.

reply

esotericn 1 day ago [–]

This is a really good description.

It also puts into context the fact that other individuals have _different_ extents.

reply

jasim 1 day ago [–]

There is _something_ that one can discover when they try psychedelics. It is a non-normal experience and so by definition will have novel data. Is it useful though? So many people couldn't have been flatly wrong (but they said that about religion) - so there could be something to it. One of that is the realization that our sensory inputs, how we process them, and also how we understand ourselves, the world, and the separateness of the self from everything around us - are not preordained. The way we look at all of them is not the only way. We think the way we think because we've evolved to it. What we see is not the objective reality; it is just a filter through which we perceive it. This experience can allow someone who's prepared for it, to break out of their own patterned ways of thinking.

But - there is a reason we've evolved to perceive reality in this way. It allows us to survive. Material concerns - health, wealth, status etc. and extractive consumption which messes up "nature", and having ego/identity distinct from nature -- all of this serve useful, vital purposes. A person who's constantly tripping will find it difficult to survive both in modern and ancient times long enough to propagate their genes.

People search for profundity in these experiences, and sure there are some. But to really understand the world and nature, I think the lens of science - observation, empiricism, and the scientific process is a better bet. There unfortunately really isn't anything _deeper_ about life. And whatever there is, personal introspection aided by psychedelics cannot hold a candle against organized human scientific endeavor.

Also, messing with one's brain is dangerous. It is one of the least understood human organs, irreplaceable, and fundamental to life like few other things.

reply

nnq 1 day ago [–]

> messing with one's brain is dangerous

Meh. I'd say *we're likely stuck in a local optimum* - the default programming of our brains is clearly not optimal for our state of evolution... our brains evolved for hunting and gathering clearly don't have good default programming for understanding and exploring the universe.

Hope brain-computer-interfaces come soon and we can do more controlled hacks with those, but until then anything that can nudge our minds out of equilibrium / gradient-pit is great. And *some* side-effects (eg. small minority of people manifesting psychoses etc.) are a sign we're on the right track imo.

Sure, we can try tweaking external factors, sprinkling in some wars, terrorism, pandemics, riots etc. to occasionally wake some people up, our benevolent true leaders, whoever they are, treat us with these at least... but I'd support more direct and less destructive alternatives :)

reply

tetris11 1 day ago [–]

You have no guarantee that the next drug-induced iteration will push you towards another local optimum though. If it redefines your current experiences, it could misattribute many things true positives you have learned throughout your life.

reply

spdionis 1 day ago [–]

> One of that is the realization that our sensory inputs, how we process them, and also how we understand ourselves, the world, and the separateness of the self from everything around us - are not preordained. The way we look at all of them is not the only way. We think the way we think because we've evolved to it. What we see is not the objective reality; it is just a filter through which we perceive it.

Yes, this is exactly the take away one should take in my opinion.

Going into deep spiritual meaning about nature is a rabbit hole.

reply

ipnon 1 day ago [–]

The nature of an internal psychological experience is that it is deeply personal. The best analogy I can provide for you is that of the religious conversion. A strong psychedelic experience is like Saul being called out to by Jesus from the heavens or Moses receiving the commandments from the burning bush. In a moment, an experience once thought impossible shows them they have a humble place in a bigger picture. Psychedelics are similar, for reasons not fully understood.

Common experiences during psychedelic therapy include the sensation of having died or feeling the boundary between yourself and others or yourself and the world dissolve. You are correct to note that there is no evidence of either such things occurring during any psychedelic experience at any time to any person. It's the deeply personal quality of the experience that induces significant changes in behavior for the users.

Another great analogy is that of new parenthood. You may just see a wailing lump of flesh, defecating and crying out for nourishment. The parents themselves often see their own reflection in an endless chain of reproduction, and feel a new responsibility having been forced to really consider their place in this ongoing process.

I think you are right to be skeptical of psychedelic drugs. If you have doubts about the efficacy of the drugs as a treatment, I encourage you to skim a few of the most relevant studies. Under quantifiable circumstances, psychedelic drugs produce reliable and positive benefits to the mental health of certain types of individuals.

reply

aero142 1 day ago [–]

I think I am mostly skeptical about peoples description of their own experiences and I am also concerned that we don't have a metric to measure the diminished objective evaluation of reality that I see in so many people.

It seems pretty clear that psychedelics can allow reforming certain thought patterns outside what would be possible otherwise. I just hope not all of the people running the experiments are participating in the experiment as well.

reply

ipnon 1 day ago [–]

I completely agree with you. We should not compromise the scientific method to push an agenda.

reply

idreyn 1 day ago [–]

> They common quality is that the experiences sound disconnected from reality. They try to explain the experience and are fully convinced they learned some fundamental truth but can't explain it in any way that makes sense.

$0.02 — psychedelics help you understand the way the world is by allowing you to temporarily experience the way the world *isn't*. most of these fundamental truths just get verbalized as platitudes because, well, they're widely-understood fundamental truths. the benefit is in examining them with a new parallax.

> there seems to be a lot of downside in breaking critical thinking in a lot of people's heads.

agreed inasmuch as psychedelics sometimes do induce long-lasting, harmful delusions. but...the upside of breaking critical thinking for a little while is that you get to experience its limits as a mode of engaging with the world. and you get to put it back together from its constituent parts, and occasionally find that one of those parts might not belong in there.

reply

at_a_remove 1 day ago [–]

My first "trip" I came away with the following insights, which I would not describe as particularly profound.

First, that I could sometimes be too hard on myself, for no benefit.

Second, that I had a tendency to drive my body around like a crappy old station wagon I didn't care about, some kind of hand-me-down; I realized "I *am* the station wagon, when I wreck this one, that's it."

Each subsequent trip did leave me with a kind of refreshed feeling, like I had the vents blown out and the floor scrubbed. That's about as ineffable as I got. Perhaps I lack imagination.

reply

xtony 1 day ago [–]

I don't think it's really that you lack imagination; it's that the human condition is quite universal in a lot of ways so the insights you gleaned were not particularly novel. But the real value is in actually taking the insights to heart, rather than dismissing them as empty platitudes.

reply

vlasev 9 hours ago [–]

Perhaps you lack imagination, perhaps you lack dose, setting, mood, etc. Have you tried different kinds of music to go along with these? Have you tried to isolate from most of your senses like sight? It's a very different experience to trip fully awake and out and about vs headphones in, eyes closed, lying down.

reply

throwawayacc92 1 day ago [–]

I've tried psychedelics and I totally agree.

The benefit to me is that you can understand how other people see the world. Psychedelics strip away the "you" of perception. Instead, it allows you to see the world for how it actually is and understand how different everybody perceives the world.

For me, it helped me understand that nobody cares about what I do and that really helped my social anxiety. Everyone sees the world so differently that I shouldn't worry what other people think of me.

Just my 2c.

reply

mybandisbetter 1 day ago [–]

Personally, doing mushrooms helped me work out some stuff for my PhD thesis research. What he says about making your brain more plastic is the key point. I thought about things from a new angle, which directly informs my current research.

I also saw palpably how much I judge myself in every moment of the day, which I had never realized before. Reducing that judgement has become an important goal. That's just useful. It's not wacky far-out magic thinking.

Now, if I tried to describe to you the beauty of what I saw, I would say it looks like a cathedral, and have to stop there, or it will start to sound like nonsense. But that's only because we don't have useful language to discuss the specifics of the experience, so we have to try to use metaphors, which easily sound like BS, unless you've seen it yourself. But then, the metaphors used to describe any specialist field sounds a bit like BS if you don't have the technical language, or direct experience, to make sense of it.

reply

aero142 1 day ago [–]

How do you know it was actually beautiful rather than simply stimulating the part of your brain that registers beauty?

reply

colinmhayes 1 day ago [–]

Objective aesthetics is a question that we are not likely to solve.

reply

Lammy 1 day ago [–]

Why do you consider those to be different?

reply

aero142 1 day ago [–]

I'm pretty sure others have better answers than I do on whether objects we appreciate and describe as beautiful have intrinsic quality or if the entirety of the beauty exists only in the observer. I believe that there is an interplay between observer and object but I don't think I could prove it to you. However, if there was a pill that made me believe that something I previously thought was terrible and ugly was the most beautiful thing I had seen, that would not convince me that objects had no inherent beauty, just that the my brain was easily manipulated.

reply

mybandisbetter 1 day ago [–]

Ha, right, perhaps I hallucinated separately the image and the emotion that it is beautiful. My guess (just a guess) is that the images were themselves generated by the parts of the brain that register beauty, and so were beautiful by definition. If that's not true, I suspect that if you sat a large sample of people to look at these images, most would agree they were beautiful.

reply

BiteCode_dev 1 day ago [–]

If you work a lot on yourself, you always end up learning things you can't explain to others.

When you approach life intellectually, because it has been your best weapon until now, you tend to think that if you understand something clearly, then you can express it as clearly.

But just like it's impossible to explain blue to a blind man, it's impossible to explain realizations about what happens inside yourself, to people outside. Or maybe you'll find a way (E.G: frequency for colors), but it will have no impact on the other party because the experience it what matters.

It's weird, but there are actually a lot that happens to us that we have no vocabulary for. Or no language tools, or even shared concepts, for. It's very frustrating, espacially if you are particularly good at putting things in words.

I like step by step explanations to get a grap on things. It infuriated me when I had to learn practices that weren't taught that way. It felt such BS. But I now know that it's not. It's just our way of communicating is limited, like everything in the human condition. And the more you practice, the more you see things you didn't notice before in yourself. It's no surprise we got no word for something we seldom pay attention to.

Knowing that now, I understand why so many self-help practices seems so full of shenanigans: testimonies look irrational, full of terrible analogies and symbolism, or flat "duh, bro".

Plus, people create complicated believe systems around their experience and mix up everything. We are so desperate for the extraordinary that we will make it up at any occasion. E.G: meditation is a very mondain activity, but the term is loaded with a lot of stereotypes, expectations and mythology.

It's confusing, and doesn't scream credibility.

Also, we reuse the same labels for totally different things. I've seen hundred of people taking about psychedelics or meditating, and they do it in vastly different ways.

If you take LSD at a party, it's not the same than in a guided ceremony. If you medidate 10 minutes singing a mantra, it's not the same than a 10 days silent retreat, etc.

Then, add variety in people, the fact experience can't be measured, that there is no way to be objective about it, the placebo effect, history, culture, politics, moral, religion, other believes, etc.

And you got yourself a puddle of mud.

But it's worth exploring, I swear.

reply

young_unixer 1 day ago [–]

Maybe because psychedelics don't teach you any new "objective" information but rather a completely different (and convincing) way to interpret the information you already had.

"Our perception of time flow is just an illusion". Any smart person understands what that sentence means, but the default state of your brain is believing the illusion, so you don't really *feel* it, you only understand the concept.

When I was on LSD, time flow being an illusion was the default state of my brain. No need to make a mental effort to understand anything. It felt as natural as breathing.

But it's hard to explain these *natural* things without sounding line a crazy person.

reply

aero142 1 day ago [–]

> Our perception of time flow is just an illusion

Can you demonstrate this in any meaningful way that will affect the world you exist in?

reply

light_cone 1 day ago [–]

I am not the parent, so I cannot comment on this specific realization.

But if I may, I want to give a point of data of one effect in the actual world beyond the illusion of the drug, which I believe is what you asked:

During an LSD trip one day, I could easily imagine the vision of a third party watching us, the human race, as one would observe ants going on with their lives. This observation would span across all the civilizations though time on earth, like an epic movie/dream if you will.

In this imaginative "history of the human race" playing before me, I could see myself as I was, that is only a faint bleep, that one day was born, and the day after would die.

This made me feel how insignificant we are, and how futile our day-to-day vexations can be.

This is not a new idea, I was aware before the trip that we are not a lot in the grand scheme of things. But feeling it is another thing.

Having at this very moment as little emotional attachment to my own life as anyone would have to Mr Random Smith born in 1865, made me _feel_ how little we all are, and how almost everyone really live in the illusion that their life, their values, is somehow so important and timeless, whereas in reality, it is probably just a result of being born at a time and a place. In short: life is short, and values are very relative.

So I came back from this trip having understood more of the world. Not as if I magically understood the very fabric of reality. Not as if I became a saint, as if every issue in the world has been revealed to me as self-evident. But as if I became a little wiser, by the simple virtue of taking off my ego for a few hours (if not for real, at least in feeling).

This realization, this feeling, I came back with it. I keep it constantly with me, still to this day. It helped me grow as a person. And it really helps me to put my daily vexations into perspective. I am more serene because of that. This, to me, is not an illusion, but an actual helpful epiphany I had.

reply

young_unixer 1 day ago [–]

I can't, but even if it were false, the point about psychedelics showing you other perspectives about the same information is still valid.

reply

MrScruff 1 day ago [–]

I don't think the article is arguing that the specifics of what people see in an LSD or Psilocybin trip are of significance. Rather it's the shift of perspective that often results that can be of benefit. For someone with an incurable illness, the fear of death might make their final years unbearable. An experience that deemphasises the self and puts life in context (which is what some have described) seems like a valuable treatment.

reply

thisiszilff 1 day ago [–]

From my own personal experiences, the most profound, impactful realization I had was in simply seeing my mental state change in an irregular way. It makes you suddenly aware of all the things you've taken for granted in your mental life that suddenly seem so fluid and malleable. The observation of lots of mental walls suddenly coming down and being free in your own head, that sticks with you.

reply

glaugh 1 day ago [–]

Lots of good answers here. And I think there’s reason to be skeptical.

One concrete thing I’ve taken out of it is greater empathy for my kids’ lived experience. Alison Gopnik at Berkeley talks about how fmri studies suggest that the increased connectivity between different regions of the brain on psychedelics shows some similarities to children’s brains at all times.

I can sense in my kids, particularly the one with some sensory processing issues, just how overwhelming certain situations can be by analogizing to my experiences with psychedelics. I look at her and think, yeah, I wouldn’t be able to handle this birthday party either if my brain was in that state.

reply

alexandercrohde 1 day ago [–]

I've noticed this too.

There are a number of common-phrases I'll hear like "everything is connected" or "everything is alive/sentient."

However, not everything is connected, effective thinking is very much about identifying independent problems. Also I certainly don't believe everything is alive, and I certainly don't think this opinion should be held on the basis of chemicals rather than scientific data.

Edit: And what's most disconcerting is that they seem to think these phrases "mean" something. If they said "Well, there's really no way I can articulate it, but it's changed my emotional outlook on a lot of things" then I'd be much more receptive.

reply

jes5199 1 day ago [–]

I guess what gets me is that there is a hidden premise in scientific materialism that _nothing_ is alive and _nothing_ is connected, because it starts with inanimate fundamental parts and tries to build up to reality.

From a psychedelic perspective, that's backwards - if you start, instead, from "what are my perceptions" and try to extrapolate out, you start to find that the default assumptions assume there's a boundary somewhere - "light hits my retina so I see it" "my optic nerve sends a signal so I see it" "certain neurons fire so I see it" but there's no firm place to draw the line "this is where the light stops and where the perception begins", your body and the light are one machine, going from the big bang through the star through space through objects through your eye through your brain - there's no solid boundary between any of those things, it's one long unbroken string of causality.

Or, you're having a conversation with a friend, and you realize that all of the words, all of the concepts, the patterns of your speech, are all things that you got from somewhere else, they flow through you, from person to person, throughout history - you're not having a conversation, the conversation is having _you_

Or, you start thinking about your life and the world and you think about incredible pain you've experienced. And great beauty you've seen. And your greatest fear. And your greatest joy. And you realize - the palette of your experience has _incredible_ dynamic range, like your brain is some kind of magnificent radio and the music it plays is every perception you have - from colors and smells to the most complicated ideas are all things it can receive or transmit or something .... but who is listening?

Or any of thousands of other non-normal schemas. None of these function as scientific knowledge - they're shifts in perspective, but they don't make new predictions (or if they do, those predictions can be re-explaned back into the scientific materialist metaphor!).

And while the goal of science is to see reality as it really is, there's a default perspective to science, which is to isolate components to see how they work in a simplified context, and then to say "the complexity of reality is just like the simplicity of the simplified contexts, only without the simplification" which is a super interesting hallucination but I don't see why it's any more _correct_ than any of the other visions of complexity

reply

vokep 1 day ago [–]

One of the best explanations of it I've seen. Touches on the magic feeling of it (how would having a direct feeling of perception of the causal chain of the entire universe possibly *not* feel magical and profound) without depending on the reader having had a psychedelic experience to understand.

That state of direct sense of universal causal connection is achievable sober. Not meditation either (though I hear thats one reliable way too). I accidentally "clicked" into it one day while thinking about the border between my skin and inanimate objects. I thought about the idea of my skin being part of me, my control of this reality, and the objects being somehow just entirely separate. It started to seem to make no sense that I can understand and feel in a deep way that my hand is *mine* but what it touches is *something else*. I then started thinking about how the hand seems like its mine, but really only seems like that because of nerves etc. connecting it to my brain. That became a thought about how I can even maintain a coherent mind across the space the brain exists in, and soon enough it clicked and I *knew* it. It was simultaneously a bit exciting, and profoundly calming.

I don't think I had any direct major life improvement from that realization alone however. It took psychedelics to understand how to use that perspective to snap out of anger or rise above anxious fears.

reply

jtr1 1 day ago [–]

This is one of the best articulations I've come across. For me, it sparked the realization that the boundary line between (to cite your example) light and perception is on some level an arbitrary distinction between words, that reality is continuous but language is quantized and the relationship between the two is malleable. There are numerous other paths to this insight, but for me it turned an intellectual understanding into a gut-level one.

Foucault, for instance, penned this anecdote about Borges in his introduction to "The Order of Things" five years before he took acid out in death valley:

“This book first arose out of a passage in [Jorge Luis] Borges, out of the laughter that shattered, as I read the passage, all the familiar landmarks of my thought—our thought that bears the stamp of our age and our geography—breaking up all the ordered surfaces and all the planes with which we are accustomed to tame the wild profusion of existing things, and continuing long afterwards to disturb and threaten with collapse our age-old distinction between the Same and the Other. This passage quotes a ‘certain Chinese encyclopaedia’ in which it is written that ‘animals are divided into: (a) belonging to the Emperor, (b) embalmed, (c) tame, (d) suckling pigs, (e) sirens, (f) fabulous, (g) stray dogs, (h) included in the present classification, (i) frenzied, (j) innumerable, (k) drawn with a very fine camelhair brush, (l) et cetera, (m) having just broken the water pitcher, (n) that from a long way off look like flies’. In the wonderment of this taxonomy, the thing we apprehend in one great leap, the thing that, by means of the fable, is demonstrated as the exotic charm of another system of thought, is the limitation of our own, the stark impossibility of thinking that.”

reply

Nbox9 1 day ago [–]

> “everything is alive/sentient”

Here is a six hour mathematically rigorous lecture by John Conway in which he argues either everything has free will or nothing has free will. I’m not trying to convince you everything is sentient, but to introduce some doubt in your black & white thinking. https://youtu.be/tmx2tpcd…

reply

SAI_Peregrinus 1 day ago [–]

That's a very particular definition of "free will": it's either everything follows a deterministic time evolution (so its future behavior is dependent only on what happened in its past light-cone) or not. It's not the "intuitive" idea of "free will" most people are used to, though that isn't a well-defined concept.

reply

jjbiotech 1 day ago [–]

> However, not everything is connected

This assertion is just as unfounded as the opposite.

reply

kls 1 day ago [–]

Probably a better explanation is everything is whole. The problem is you are trying to envision it from the perspective of analysis, when what they are describing is a visualization of their feelings, emotions, and perceptions sometimes we don't understand our feelings, psychedelics given the right circumstances can change the perceptions of our feelings and emotions, rewire our inputs and cause us to visualize/hear/physically feel them. That is why it sounds like gibberish when someone tried to describe them. It would be akin, to all the sudden you vision and touch where reversed, how would you describe touching blue, or seeing cold, how would anyone who has never experienced it relate.

This is also why, it can be an effective mental health tool, because it rewires inputs and outputs and allows different parts of our brain to experience our feelings or our thoughts. Sometimes profound ideas come from it, sometime it just a bunch of dumb gibberish.

reply

fsloth 1 day ago [–]

"Everything is connected" is a description of the sensation, not a statement of a scientific fact.

My personal experience was like this: This was nearly 30 years ago, I was 13 and invested some time in 'accidentally' meditating - I just looked at a spot on my roof for a long time. Then suddenly - wham - I literally feel a deep connection between *everything* I look at. The trees outside my window, the world, everything.

Let me provide an analogue. You can feel pain, yes? You can feel moving your foot? You feel your hands are part of you? Well, it was like that, only, I felt that *everything was connected*.

Was it just neurons firing in my head, creating a strange mode of sensations for a while? Yes. Was it devoid of deeper scientific significance? Yes. Was it profound? Hell yes.

Deeply spiritual experiences don't need to be mystical or attached to a larger theological context. They can be taken as a non-magical, psychological state of mind just like sleep or orgasm. This does not make them any less profound.

reply

danharaj 1 day ago [–]

Can you name two things that are not connected?

reply

twobuy 1 day ago [–]

The souls of 2 individuals?

reply

vokep 1 day ago [–]

If those are say, you and I, or you and the parent comment, how are they seperate?

We're experiencing identical perception right now, me in the form of reading the words you wrote, and you in the form of reading these words. The words are just information which is now duplicated in both our minds. When the psychedelic "everything is connected" concept is brought up, this is what is meant. Its not some new magic that has been discovered, its realizing that the mundane everyday mechanics that allow our reality to function, are in fact quite magical, not mundane at all. But anyone can still choose to see it as mundane, its just a choice of lens.

reply

jes5199 1 day ago [–]

That's the most prevalent modern Christian view but many traditions have some version of monopsychism, where the many souls are a manifestation of the one God, or Allah, or Brahman, or Buddha-nature

reply

amanaplanacanal 1 day ago [–]

That assumes that a "soul" is a real thing.

reply

colinmhayes 1 day ago [–]

Dualism is one of the stupidest concepts ever imagined.

reply

Nbox9 1 day ago [–]

Root comment stated that taking psychedelics made him want to explore the universe more. This sounds like a concrete, positive, and sane outcome. There is a voice inside the psychedelic community that does claim to preach deep fundamental truths, but there is also a reemerging scientific and clinical voice that are using psychedelics for concrete, positive, sane outcomes.

Michael Pollen’s How to Change Your Mind is a 2018 survey of this voice.

reply

hmschreck 1 day ago [–]

The word commonly used for this sort of thing is "ineffable" - that which cannot be put into words.

If you want to see a less "these are magical" and more "here's some science" perspective, you might like "How to Change Your Mind" by Michael Pollan. Always very down to earth, gets into some mechanics of effects, well written and engaging.

reply

danenania 1 day ago [–]

Everything you consider objective reality is filtered through your senses and your subjective perceptions. Psychedelics highlight this by applying novel transformations to our processing of the input stream. It’s a bit like how you perceive the world differently when under the influence of emotions like fear, anger, or love, but more dramatic. They reinforce that reality is first a mental construction: it’s less fixed and more malleable than most of us have ever considered.

So when you say that people’s experiences with psychedelics seem disconnected from reality, it might be because you have an incomplete picture of how fluid, complex, and inherently incomprehensible this thing we call “reality” really is.

reply

banads 1 day ago [–]

>They try to explain the experience and are fully convinced they learned some fundamental truth but can't explain it in any way that makes sense.

Imagine trying to describe the color blue to a blind person, or the sound of music to a deaf person.

Some things cannot be described or understood without direct experience.

reply

jes5199 1 day ago [–]

I think part of is that it changes your sense of what "disconnected from reality" means. It's not like a dream where you wake up and say _ohh that was a dream_. It's more like, _ohh my whole reality is a dream, all the time_

reply

danharaj 1 day ago [–]

Do you think it is possible that there are truths that cannot be articulated in words? Is it possible that there are meaningful experiences that cannot be easily conveyed by language?

There are many parallels one can draw between accounts of psychedelic experiences and mystical or spiritual experiences brought about by other methods, such as (but not limited to) meditation, ritual, music, or fasting. I haven't really read an account of such phenomena that really captures the full weight of its direct experience. Indeed, there are many ancient and continuing traditions that use psychedelic substances in a religious capacity. If one doesn't think there's any meaning in such realms of human activity then I think that's their personal answer.

Have you read the Doors of Perception [0]? It's a fairly lucid, but ultimately limited, account of psychedelic experience by Aldous Huxley. Perhaps they did send a poet :^)

> They common quality is that the experiences sound disconnected from reality.

Well here's the thing, and it's something one can realize in a very visceral way in the middle of a trip: There is no disconnecting from reality. Your experience is *always* some incomplete part of reality, some part of the reality of your body. I think you knew that and were getting at something else.

What I guess you mean by this: In normal operation our cognitive experience seems to "refer" to the outside world in a carefully regulated way. That makes sense because we think in order to understand and interact with our environment in predictable ways. If our cognitive processes wildly differed from the reality relevant to our safety and well-being, we would die. So, our senses are well calibrated by a constant feedback loop between cognitive processes, interaction with our environment, and perception of our environment. We are so well accustomed to this calibration that it is difficult to even perceive it unless we are very carefully attentive to our own thoughts.

Psychedelics can throw all of your cognitive processes out of that control loop that keeps them in tune with external reality. But that doesn't disconnect them from reality, *your cognitive processes are part of reality*. So, what are you experiencing? What are you when you are not being pushed constantly into alignment with the Other? If you could see your normal experience in the context of a much wider possibility of experience, how would that change you? It's very plausible that this kind of insight would elude even the most precise language.

All that said, I don't think psychedelics are for everyone. Some people are very sensitive to being brought out of their normal cognition and have a hard time finding their way back. I think maybe in a far future when we have reached a very advanced state of medical understanding, psychedelics could be sufficiently understood and nuanced that they could be "for everybody".

[0] PDF Warning https://maps.org/images/p...

reply

aero142 1 day ago [–]

> Do you think it is possible that there are truths that cannot be articulated in words? Is it possible that there are meaningful experiences that cannot be easily conveyed by language?

In a vague sense, yes, but I think I'm making is subtly different. I think many people struggle to turn important ideas in their heads into clear words. This synthesis is largely what separates smart people from people who change the world. My observation is that psychedelics seem to place the idea in a persons head that they have synthesized some fundamental truth, but their explanation of it doesn't sound like a difficulty putting a complex idea into words, but instead they discover that that thing they are convinced is a fundamental truth is actually just an empty shell. They have just broken the part of their brain capable of realizing that there is nothing there but an emotional belief.

reply

jknoepfler 1 day ago [–]

From personal experience, the depression-alleviating effects of mushrooms are not caused by grand spiritual experiences (although death acceptance and a general feeling of spiritual peace do accompany the experience) so much as mental clarity that causes very powerful, practical gestalt shifts. Here's a deliberately boring but true example:

I used to be very disinterested in cleaning and tidying. I live way up in my head most days, and if I let myself, I can go weeks without really looking at myself or my environment. When I tripped the first time, I looked around myself and really saw my living situation for the first time, in profound relief. It was like cleaning grease off a camera lens. I was a stereotypical 20-something depressed academic living alone, "in filth" so to speak. I realized very clearly and distinctly that I was choosing to create this environment, and that my habit of neglecting tidiness and hygiene was an affectation I was choosing out of irrational pride (I was clinging to the childish notion that being bothered by filth was irrational and a waste of time and energy better spent working). I just... saw all that clearly, in a manner of a few seconds, and made up my mind to change my behavior. That decision has improved my life, and generally made me a happier and more functional human being (as well as a better partner to others). I've expanded on that realization to make my external demeanor and appearance more approachable, and taken the gruff, sometimes nasty edge out of my personality. This has not, to my knowledge, diminished my productivity.

Having tripped a few times, each time I've discovered and confronted some new set of facts about myself and how I think and behave that, upon sober examination, are true.

The last time I tripped on mushrooms I was overwhelmed by the cacophony of toxic thoughts that were bubbling up in my head "unbidden". It was like hearing my voice recorded for the first time - it was definitely the familiar thoughts I had every day, but I realized just how weirdly cruel and unnecessary they were. That led me into daily sitting and paying attention to the shit stew bubbling around in my head, which has really helped short-circuit some of the bizarre self-flagellating depressive thought loops that used to paralyze me.

Again, just from personal experience, mushrooms remove barriers to self-perception, and put you in a frame of mind for having powerful realizations about yourself and your relationship with the world.

They ALSO can produce some absolutely mind-blowing spiritual ecstasy, feelings of oneness with the world, an expanded appreciation of the way the natural world works, awareness and acceptance of death... but for my two cents, the big value proposition is ripping away the mental filters we impose unconsciously on ourselves that cause unnecessary suffering.

reply

deepsun 1 day ago [–]

Would NOT be a nice if everyone ended up suicidal and manic, like my best friend after one particularly bad trip. He's still on treatment and out of society, by the way, 6 years so far :(

reply

TravHatesMe 1 day ago [–]

Yep I have personally witnessed a friend lose his mind. Years later he is not back to normal. This was a man that I had once admired greatly. To see him deteriorate into a disillusioned stranger was terrifying and heart-breaking. Be careful folks! Don't play with drugs when your mind isn't in the right place or if you're currently going through something in life. Make sure you have a positive mindset, do it in a very safe environment with people that you are very comfortable with because there will likely be long periods of silence.

reply

o-__-o 1 day ago [–]

It’s almost like mental health is just like our physical health. Not preparing ones self for changes or heavy lifting can cause muscle failure. Why is your brain any different?

I support psychedelics but you need someone who’s borderline a psychotherapist to escort you the first time and guide you long term. Too many people just swallow a pill without thinking of side effects...

Edit: Downvoted... I spent a year researching MDMA and preparing my brain for the toxic effects before taking it recreationally for the first time. Had the best ever experience and never had the ectasy hangover that’s so common with the drug.. you need to mentally prepare before doing psychoactive drugs and if you can’t you need a sitter and be ready for the possibility of a bad time.

reply

TeaDrunk 1 day ago [–]

I highly disagree, mostly because I've yet to see any real long-term studies that show that taking psychedelics actually benefits people long term to the point where we should make literally everyone take it. I have an illness on the psychotic spectrum that I wasn't able to get treatment or addressment for until my 20's, which is when such disorders can begin manifesting if they are to manifest. Psychotic and dissociative disorders are also a significant portion of the human population and are often neglected or straight up ignored in discussions like this.

reply

banads 1 day ago [–]

We shouldn't make literally everyone take it, that's silly. The John's Hopkins studies do show sustained long term (6-12 months) clinical improvements for about 80% of test subjects -- from a single dose. No other psychopharmaceutical drug comes close to such success, much less with a single dose.

reply

TeaDrunk 1 day ago [–]

Test subjects that are highly selected for to avoid the exact conditions I was describing. We need larger studies before we make such bold claims that potentially make invisible or completely overlook the variety of mental conditions that this sort of plan would expose people of. Additionally, 6 to 12 months is not nearly long enough to say that an entire population should be dosed with a drug.

reply

banads 1 day ago [–]

Yes, anyone trying to push these drugs on literally everyone is a fool. The reason people with pre-existing psychosis like schizophrenia are being ruled out of such studies is because the risk is plainly obvious.

That's why doctors often prescribe medicine with the caveat "do not take drug A if you have conditions XYZ"

reply

TeaDrunk 1 day ago [–]

Which is why I'm highly disagreeing with the concept that such drugs should be widely or anywhere near universally taken. You'll likely have a significant subset of people who shouldn't be taking this medication, either due to being related to someone with a psychotic or dissociative disorder, or having one themselves. I also worry about people whose existing schizotypal traits are within normal bounds but may be exaggerated by psychedelics to a negative outcome.

reply

banads 1 day ago [–]

High doses of psychedelics literally induces schizophrenia in its users, albeit for a brief amount of time, so it makes sense why that could be dangerous for people already living in such a state

reply

Trasmatta 1 day ago [–]

My experience with psychedelics was unpleasant and gave me anxiety for months. I don't think "everyone trying them" is a good idea. They can be great for certain people in certain situations, but are not without dangers.

Especially for ones as strong as salvia or DMT.

reply

kevmo314 1 day ago [–]

Yeah I would be in support of everyone trying them in a supportive setting with some professional oversight. Definitely would not recommend going it alone.

reply

Trasmatta 1 day ago [–]

Agreed, more access to psychedelics in a safe and professional setting would be really good. I wish I had had been able to do that for my experiences -- as it stands, I think they're ruined for me forever. (I'm okay with that though, one lesson I learned was that I could learn anything psychedelics could teach me using other methods.)

reply

palimpsests 1 day ago [–]

> I could learn anything psychedelics could teach me using other methods

how do you know what they would have taught you?

I'm sorry to hear that you had such a negative experience with these substances.

reply

tayo42 1 day ago [–]

If you don't mind I'd be interested in hearing more details. I'm personally really curious about stories like this, mostly because I have the opinion the world would be better off if more people tried lsd or something once.

reply

astura 1 day ago [–]

A single experience with psychedelics ruined my friend's life. Caused permanent psychosis, he's either dead, homeless, or in jail now, I wish I knew.

reply

XaoDaoCaoCao 23 hours ago [–]

Sorry to hear that. Hopefully we'll learn enough to prevent such mismatches and to freely allow petitioning wanderers to become holy fools for a brief time.

Note: Done 200+ trips w/ 2 bad ones in the first 10.

reply

bananamerica 1 day ago [–]

> Would be a nice world indeed if everyone tried psychedelics

Sometimes I think grandiose statements like these are a consequence of the idea that this kind of insight is only achievable through the use of psychedelics, when in fact they’re not.

reply

looper_dude 1 day ago [–]

They are a shortcut to insights, that without, might take a person years to come upon otherwise. And that is if they are actively trying. For most people who aren't normally driven to spend a lot of time actively self-reflecting and critically observing their world with the intent on finding truth, rather than merely confirming their beliefs, psychedelics might be the only way to kickstart things. An important property of psychedelics is that they peel away the ego, which frees one to confront ideas that might normally be too uncomfortable to think about. Of course, psychedelics are not for everyone. Like, it's probably not a good idea for people with, or at risk of developing serious mental illness. And no one should ever feel pressured to take them if they feel uncomfortable about it. But the effects are long lasting-to-permanent with regard to opening one up to seeing the world in new ways, askings questions, and not taking for granted that things are as they seem. So while I agree with you that the idea that everyone should take psychedelics is grandiose, I also agree with OP's sentiment that the world would be a nicer place if more people took them. There's too many people roaming around thinking they've got it all figured out and that there's not much else to the world than what they are familiar with in their own little bubbles. Psychdelics, essentially immediately, pop your bubble and alert you to a much wider plane of existence. It's humbling, while at the same time reassuring, to truly get a sense that we are all connected. And I think it's rare for people to actually experience this without the aid of psychedelics.

reply

bananamerica 1 day ago [–]

I know plenty of close minded people that took psychedelics. I could even argue that psychedelic users tend to be more close minded than the rest of the population —- their religious devotion to these drugs is to me a great example of fundamentalism and rigidness of thought, and the notion that these drugs can be nothing but good betrays arrogance (since insight inherently positions them above the “square” masses that did not take the red pill). I don’t like when religious leaders tell me how I *should* experience life, and some of the rhetoric by psychedelic users is worryingly similar.

I could also use philosophy to question the very nature of these insights. On what basis does one affirm psychedelic trips provides greater access to reality than regular conscious states?

reply

looper_dude 1 day ago [–]

No one should be telling you that you have to take them, that's as wrong as forcing your religion on somebody. You do you. And as I said, it isn't for everyone.

There's enough research and annecdotal evidence to show that there are indeed positive effects for a lot of people who take them, however.

Certainly, if you're not open to reflecting, you're not going to not going to come to any realization no matter how stoned or sober you are.

And no, I wouldn't say psychedelics get you access to some hidden realty. We all have access to the same thing, they just make it easier to access more of it quicker than if you, say, spent ten years of your life meditating every day. As I said, it's a shortcut, and for some people it can be the kick in the pants that they need to get the ball rolling.

reply

bananamerica 1 day ago [–]

Oh yeah there are lots of evidence showing psychedelics can be useful for sure. I just don’t have much patience for religious zealots, even when they’re part of my own religion.

reply

sharadov 1 day ago [–]

The experience is so far out of the realm of reality, that when you try to explain to a non-user it sounds like absolute mumbo-jumbo gibberish. Like Leary said "Turn on, Tune in, Drop out".

reply

alexashka 1 day ago [–]

You need to be very careful extrapolating your personal experiences towards the masses.

Humans are a violent, vengeful, petty species. Modern society does a great job of discouraging and masking those qualities, making the youngsters of this generation feel like those qualities hardly exist!

They do, and brain altering drugs might re-activate those qualities and then some, you need to be very careful.

reply

XaoDaoCaoCao 23 hours ago [–]

"Modern society does a great job of discouraging and masking those qualities,"

Until you attempt to shake another's position in a social hierarchy (wittingly or not). Violence, vengeance, and pettiness are not only driven by barbaric feelings. They're strategies! Ones that disgust my intrinsic aesthetics, and probably yours, but which nonetheless are wielded. So let the timid have their controlled experience with such things so that when the wolf "of man known as man" attempts to ambush them, they can drive it off.

But since we're talking about psychedelics like LSD, awakening those qualities seems like a rare experience. I think majority experience would be a light in a tunnel that younger generations seem funneled into as everything around them is increasingly predatory ala ads, distraction, substandard diets, and probably a million other parasites. Being able to shed that for a brief bit and to not shoulder the heaviness of all your frustrations and expectations is immense.

reply

alexashka 13 hours ago [–]

I don't deny the benefits of escapism and novel experiences. I'm an escapism expert myself :)

I'm simply against people experimenting with substances that don't undergo any quality control and that may result in your brain being scrambled for extended periods of time afterwards.

We *should* decriminalize drugs, research them and offer psychedelic holidays, it's a complete no-brainer, but until then, the risk/reward ratio is simply not in favor of taking the chance, not to mention all the problems of dealing with drug dealers - you don't want your source of consciousness exploration being tied to someone willingly being a criminal.

reply

beepboopbeep 1 day ago [–]

This isn't true and it's not ok to assume this. In general, the psychedelic community must stop overlaying their own subjective experiences on to other people.

Psychedelics can help, but they can also harm. Psychedelics, like everything else in this world, are viable for some but not all. What we need is research without stigma and WoOoO to determine what is going on, why, and how we can shape that into a therapeutic regime coupled with counseling and support.

reply

abellerose 1 day ago [–]

An anecdotal experience shouldn't leap to a nice world indeed if everyone tried something like I did. How did it inspire you to explore this universe more is what I'm interested in.

edit: whoever disagrees should explain.

reply

ta17711771 1 day ago [–]

Salvia seems wildly...boring. Especially the physical effects.

Change my mind?

reply

Trasmatta 1 day ago [–]

Salvia can be one of the strongest "psychedelics" (it's not really a classic psychedelic even), and can completely replace reality with something else. Often a bizarre 2D experience where someone "becomes" the floor, or the siding of a house, or whatever. Or transported to some alternative reality completely unlike our own.

It can also be extremely dysphoric and terrifying. I personally wouldn't recommend it to anyone. I have heard that chewing it produces a less dysphoric experience than smoking it though, and is how it was used in traditional ceremonies.

reply

nikivi 1 day ago [–]

Not sure how much you took and in what way. For me it was a complete loss of self memory (ego death) and a very bizzare experience which unlike most other psychedelics was also tactile and not that pleasant. And after few min you are back to being fully sober.

reply

ShamelessC 1 day ago [–]

Salvia was generally the most extreme hallucinations I've ever had in the most displeasing possible way. I don't recommend it to anyone.

reply

WatermelonMan 1 day ago [–]

The last time I smoked Salvia was the most intense, spiritual out-of-body experience I've ever had. While it was profound, it was also truly terrifying and did not feel good for me at all. I think salvia is very misunderstood and underestimated by most people. You give up all control when you take a serious dose, you're just along for the ride.

Mushrooms feel wonderfully natural and therapeutic on the other hand.

reply

thrownaway954 1 day ago [–]

i really hope that if they are able to iron things out, that psychedelic drugs can be safely prescribed as an alternative for people with depression. NA and AA (Narcotics Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous) both permit alternative forms of and narcotic medicine as long as

1) they are the only available options or last ditch effort 2) prescribed by doctor which knows your addiction history 3) you are regularly and closely monitored (by doctor and support group)

even with those stipulations and checks in place, relapse is something to be concerned with. i just had a close friend relapse after 18 years cause of pain pills that were prescribed to him. in the programs defense though, he was ignoring rule #3 where he was ignoring being regularly and closely monitored by doctor and support group.

reply

▲ josephpmay 1 day ago [–]

As someone who is in MA and has a fair amount of experience with psychedelics, I don't think they are likely to trigger a relapse of other drugs. I won't say that there is never a risk of addiction to LSD or Mushrooms (I met someone yesterday who used psychedelics every week for two years), but for the vast majority of people it's an intense experience that they don't want to experience often.

reply

▲ thrownaway954 1 day ago [–]

I would rather not take the risk of relapse.

reply

▲ ta17711771 1 day ago [–]

I know this isn't what you were saying, but, pain killers are absolutely nothing like psychedelics, for the reason the other commenter said, and many more.

reply

▲ thrownaway954 18 hours ago [–]

In the eyes of NA, a drug is a drug. if you use a drug that isn't prescribed by your doctor, it is a relapse. we can go about slicing hairs all day, but the bottom line is that using a drug without being prescribed by a doctor is considered a relapse.

reply

▲ loughnane 1 day ago [–]

I know that there is merit to this.

Also it sometimes feels like we're living in a Brave New World prequel.

reply

▲ seph-reed 1 day ago [–]

Have absolutely seen first hand the positive effects of psychedelics when done right. I've also seen/experienced the negative effects. If there's one thing I really hope this doesn't lead to is more certainty in spirituality.

It's totally awesome if someone wants to follow what-if-ism ("I like to think this, but know it's wrong and will cede the point in a serious context"). If people like to put up crystals and imagine them doing things, go for it. Brains are weird and organic, there's no happiness in being purely sterile about them. Everyone believes in some fantasy narrative most of the time, doubly so when they're happy.

But if we start allowing each-other to really, fully believe in these happy thoughts, we'll be setting ourselves up to be taken advantage of.

reply

▲ palimpsests 1 day ago [–]

"more certainty in spirituality" sounds like a contradiction in terms :)

Many spiritual traditions hold the primacy of Mystery and the unknown as axiomatic.

Well-facilitated psychedelic-assisted therapy naturally provides a safe space for each individual's experience of the transpersonal (https://en.wikipedia.org/wi…). Given that these experiences occur in reality, they are, by definition, non-dual. In other words, beyond (or before) polarized concepts like "happy" or "sad". The guide and the medicine will help people integrate these experiences back into their daily lives. What this can look like, for one, is a much greater capacity to sit with uncertainty and discomfort.

If psychedelic therapy is regularly egosyntonic, that's something to track very closely and can indicate inefficacy / weakness of one or more aspects of the process (e.g. inadequate preparation, not working with a trained guide, etc).

reply

h2odragon 1 day ago [–]

"allowing each other"?

You're free to express your doubts about my reality and my interpretation of it, but you sound close to saying "some thoughts are too dangerous to thunk," and don't we already have enough of those?

reply

seph-reed 1 day ago [–]

> but you sound close to saying "some thoughts are too dangerous to thunk,"

Some thoughts are too dangerous to be thunk *indefinitely*. Thoughts can trigger the release of chemicals in your body, essentially acting like a drug themselves.

This can be highly addictive. Addiction can easily make a person cruel. Poorly thought thunks are indeed very, very dangerous (ie self inflation, blaming others for everything, believing things will fix themselves).

This doesn't mean these thoughts shouldn't ever be thought, but we should never lose our way back home to reality. I've seen many a hippy who followed spirituality too far, and became so hooked on their own vibe juice that they are no longer capable of basic scientific conversations.

reply

jimbob45 1 day ago [–]

Aren’t psychedelics extremely likely to cause psychosis in users?

reply

rhombocombus 1 day ago [–]

Think about the differences between a recreational drug experience (i.e. the experiences which precipitated the psychosis to which you are referring) and taking a known dosage of a drug in a clinical setting with supervision. Now let's visit the reality that many studies have now been completed on the clinical efficacy and potential of these medications. This isn't someone taking acid in a phish parking lot, there are now real clinical trials on a couple different drugs that were vilified by drug war propaganda that are now known to have substantial clinical potential.

reply

bduerst 1 day ago [–]

Psychedelics can cause HPPD (temporary) and Visual Snow Syndrome (permanent) in people, where they hallucinate while completely sober, sometimes indefinitely for the rest of their lives.

As someone with Visual Snow Syndrome (not contracted from drugs) it is a private living hell that risking it is not worth whatever trade off you get from discovering yourself. This is going to rub some people the wrong way on HN, but until we know more about these neurological conditions, I wouldn't recommend doing these drugs outside of a clinical setting where there are very clear benefits.

reply

elric 1 day ago [–]

Do you have a source about psychedelics being a cause of VS? I'm also curious what makes you say that VS is a hallucination, when it seems much more like a hyperawareness of visual noise.

reply

bduerst 1 day ago [–]

The short description is it's a hallucination, the long description is that it's not a hallucination, but seeing more of what's there, all the time. Like seeing the white blood cells in capillaries on the surface of your eye lens, the wrinkles in the gel on the back of your eye, and triple imaging between both feeds from both eyes overlaying a consolidated stereo view. IME explaining visual snow syndrome (VSS) to a layman is a lot like trying to explain color to a blind person, so I keep it short.

There isn't much known about the mechanism that causes VSS/HPPD, but the current line in the sand that they draw for performing VSS studies is that HPPD is temporary (<6 months) and VSS is permanent. HPPD is long known to be caused by psychedelics, but the permanent HPPD is now being re-diagnosed as VSS since they're the same symptoms and activity in PET scans.

Unfortunately, there are not a lot of studies I can link to because they've only just started researching it these past couple years, but the neuro opthamologists and psychiatrist I work with have VSS patients who contracted the syndrome after using LSD or acid, with one as far back as the 70's.

reply

djannzjkzxn 1 day ago [–]

If you don’t mind me asking, what is hell about visual snow? I have some visual artifacts including snow but they don’t cause any suffering. They are just things I can see that don’t have any emotional significance. I don’t think about them unless my attention is drawn to them somehow. Maybe the snow is more disrupting for you than my artifacts are? Do they limit your ability to perceive the world?

reply

bduerst 20 hours ago [–]

So it's natural to sometimes see visual artifacts in neurotypical adults.

We don't actually see with our eyes, but with our brains. As a neural network, the brain builds the visual image in one part, and then filters out parts of the image in another part. Kind of like how we have a sense of touch but we don't feel our clothes all the time.

With Visual Snow syndrome, the part of the brain responsible for spatial logic and building the visual image has had all the circuit breakers flipped to on. This means that the image the brain is building is at 100% all the time, and overloading the filters. Just like zooming into a 780p image on a 4K screen, the visual artifacts are visible in everything.

Unless you're seeing them 90-100% of the time you're awake, I wouldn't worry too much about it as it's natural.

reply

kryogen1c 1 day ago [–]

No, but the kernel of truth here is that unguided, amateur trips can have negative consequences. However, studies have been showing extremely positive outcomes under controlled circumstances with experienced guides.

reply

yCombLinks 1 day ago [–]

I've never seen anything to support that past antedoctes. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.g…

reply

Natsu 1 day ago [–]

I've nearly been a murder-suicide victim due to esketamine, so yes, it definitely exists. In fact, they screen out people out of the trials with psychosis due to this known potential side-effect. They also remove people from the trials for things like that.

It's too bad, because other than that side-effect, it was doing a lot of good.

reply

JBReefer 1 day ago [–]

Wow, can you elaborate?

reply

Natsu 1 day ago [–]

Not much to tell, my partner took esketamine for a few months for treatment-resistant depression. I woke up one day to someone holding a knife and sobbing uncontrollably, calmed them down and took the knife away.

The treatment stopped after that, of course, and sharp things got put away quickly. Thankfully there are no guns in the house. There may have been latent psychosis prior.

reply

kps 1 day ago [–]

“Among people without a lifetime extremely stressful event…”

It's not unlikely that people fitting the context of this article, i.e. clinical depression, *have* had a lifetime extremely stressful event, causally or consequentially.

reply

currymj 1 day ago [–]

they can, although so can SSRIs, surprisingly, by sometimes triggering mania. it's good for experienced professionals to be involved who can look for warning signs beforehand, evaluate the risks, and intervene quickly if things go badly.

i find it a little troubling and irresponsible when people go around promoting psychedelic drugs, advocating that everyone ought to take them. if you're going to do that, i think you ought to always include a long disclaimer about the negative side effects, just like the drug companies do on TV.

reply

andai 1 day ago [–]

Re: antidepressants triggering mania: it is the same with stimulants prescribed for ADHD.

reply

CryptoBanker 1 day ago [–]

Definitely not extremely likely for most. Those who are most at risk are those who have a family history of psychiatric illness

reply

bzb4 1 day ago [–]

In very much the same way currently used antidepressants can trigger schizophrenia and other related, latent disorders in users?

reply

codebolt 1 day ago [–]

Somebody can have a disposition for psychotic illness and live a whole lifetime without it manifesting. Drugs could be the trigger that destroys that person's life. Maybe these drugs should be allowed to be used in certain clinical settings, but I wish they had a better grasp on the risk factors for psychosis, so they knew who *not* to give it to. Certainly they should be kept illegal for recreational use, including marijuana.

reply

andai 1 day ago [–]

I'm against criminalization but I'm also against widespread recreational use until we have a technology to tell you if you have a predisposition or not. I've seen a lot of people's lives ruined by psychosis, and all but one were chronic cannabis users for 1-2 years prior. A causal relationship has been established. It gradually alters brain function over time. For some people (arguably 2%), this eventually pushes them over a threshold for psychosis. It seems there's no way of knowing in advance if you will be one of them.

reply

▲ looper_dude 1 day ago [–]

Well, if your life is fucked up and not in a stable mindset before deciding to take them, or there's a history of mental illness in your family, those would be some red flags to seriously consider before purchasing your ticket.

reply

▲ andai 1 day ago [–]

Exactly. And yet, those are precisely the kind of people who are the most attracted to the substance.

Previously it was suspected to be a mere correlation -- that there's something about underlying mental disorders that draws one to cannabis, rather than cannabis causing mental disorders. In recent years, they have established a causal relationship cannabis -> psychosis (assuming the predisposition is there, of course).

reply

▲ o-__-o 1 day ago [–]

Considering we don't know the mode of action of SSRI's then no, it's very much not the same..

reply

▲ winocm 1 day ago [–]

https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.g...

https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.g...

reply

▲ andai 1 day ago [–]

The risk is if you have a genetic predisposition that chronic cannabis use will interact with in a way that eventually (typically 2 years) causes psychosis.

There currently appears to be no way of knowing in advance.

I expect 98% of people will be fine (based on predisposition numbers), but I've almost run out of fingers on which to count the ones who were not so lucky.

The outcome *may* be different if psilocybin is used occasionally, and cannabis is used never. Sadly I have not met or heard of such a person.

reply

▲ rocgf 1 day ago [–]

Do you happen to have a source for this? Intuitively, 2% sounds like a very high number to me for what is being implied.

reply

▲ andai 1 day ago [–]

It's a ballpark number, between the prevalence of bipolar disorder (1-3%) and schizophrenia (0.5%).

It could be 1%, it could be 0.1%. This doesn't change the point, that you cannot predict the long-term impact to your neurochemistry until it happens to you. You won't know if you're one of the unlucky 1/1000, until you know, and then it's too late.

I've seen it happen to nine people, and most of them did not recover to a normal standard of living.

reply

rocgf 23 hours ago [–]

Ah, correct, I see where my confusion came from before. While I think you are largely correct, your explanation might be a bit incomplete.

As far as my understanding goes, these mental disorders generally have an early onset, around your early 20s, and the question of whether drugs cause them or simply speed up the timeline is unanswered. This is partly why you should abstain from drugs as long as possible - it is better to start at 25 than at 16. In other words, if you are 30, never had any mental issues and you start smoking cannabis, you are unlikely to develop schizophrenia, for example.

I may be wrong with the above, and I'd love to be corrected.

reply

taurath 1 day ago [–]

Not anywhere near extremely, but there's not actually good data as research is banned since the late 60s. They are a powerful tool.

reply

wishinghand 1 day ago [–]

Where is this claim supported?

reply

qntty 1 day ago [–]

Definitely a small risk, but not an extreme one.

reply

ta17711771 1 day ago [–]

Not cause, IMO. More like suss out/shed light on existing issues that may be getting ignored/masked.

reply

dokem 1 day ago [–]

I wouldn't call it extremely likely. I think you are underestimating how prevalent psychedelics already are in our society. Whenever I see people trying to be afraid of psychedelics I just think that they would probably outlaw sex too if given the chance.

reply

horsemessiah 1 day ago [–]

Definitely possible, but not at all extremely likely.

reply

vmception 1 day ago [–]

Is anyone researching these things as a receptor cleanse? Like each receptor is like a clogged faucet blocking seratonin binding normally and the drugs either bind in its place or cause the creation of so much neurochemicals that they flush out the receptors and they functionally normally for some time.

reply

golf3 1 day ago [–]

We can no longer ignore $my_sacred_cow

reply

megamix 1 day ago [–]

Religion

reply

carapace 1 day ago [–]

By all means decriminalize these drugs. It's a shame they were ever made illegal in the first place.

But don't get confused about what's really going on.

"Set and Setting" https://en.wikipedia.org/wi…

"Of course, the drug dose does not produce the transcendent experience. It merely acts as a chemical key..." — Timothy Leary (who ought to know.)

These drugs are like whacking the brain upside the head chemically. For most of us that's fun, but it's a crap shoot. "Bad trips" are a thing.

The possibilities for *precision* therapeutic techniques are in the creation of the *set and setting*, through structured storytelling.

(Not to make it about me but I did some psychedelics back in the day and they did not cure my depression but hypnotherapy did. YMMV.)

reply

anythingnonidin 1 day ago [–]

Yes, exactly. Psychedelics have been described as "nonspecific amplifiers".

A hypothesis I have is that therapists, and their patients, already know many of the things that'll help make them happier - but the patient isn't doing them, because they lack the motivation, or they lack the belief that they're capable of making and sticking with those changes, so why bother trying.

Doing a psychedelic trip in that therapeutic context seems to make the patient motivated to make the changes that they already logically knew would be helpful, and the trip in this context makes them believe they're capable of making and sticking with those changes - so, then they end up making those changes.

reply

rowawey 1 day ago [–]

Definitely. I need something different because I have some sort of treatment-resistant major depression that cannot be addressed with anything but medication, regardless of life circumstances, mood, health, or exercise. Although I'm not all that keen on psychedelics and disassociatives, I've tried at least 13 antidepressants and only 1 of them has done anything. The only one that's worked has been mirtazapine* with the caveats of partial GI paralysis and major weight gain. I was on it for 9 years. I tried others as my cognitive faculties and alertness have been declining over the past 2 years.

* Which is also a powerful antihistamine.

I'm beginning to wonder about the medical establishment's depth of understanding and nuance on treatment of serious depression and inability to address so-called treatment-resistant depression. For example, genetics, inflammation, auto-immune issues, diet, GI flora, and other factors that don't seem to be considered clinically. And then there's psychiatry, which is one of the few "medical professions" that doesn't directly test or examine the organ or systems they claim to treat. Psychiatry in particular seems unscientific, arbitrary, and crude.

I don't think there's any panacea, even shrooms, ketamine, or LSD, but the neuropharmacological field has a long way to go and depression is only going to become more commonplace.

reply

ajzinsbwbs 1 day ago [–]

> Although I'm not all that keen on psychedelics and disassociatives, I've tried at least 13 antidepressants and only 1 of them has done anything. The only one that's worked has been mirtazapine* with the caveats of partial GI paralysis and major weight gain. I was on it for 9 years. I tried others as my cognitive faculties and alertness have been declining over the past 2 years.

I’m also on mirtazapine and have been for a few years. It’s the first antidepressant I tried and the doc choose it because I also have insomnia and anxiety. It’s worked well for all three conditions so I’m happy with it. Are you saying you thought it was causing cognitive decline and that’s why you tried others? Wondering if it’s something I should look out for. I can understand the concern because diphenhydramine has been associated with dementia, and it’s an antihistamine like mirtazapine. However, I read that the anticholinergic property of diphenhydramine was thought to be implicated here, and mirtazapine is not anticholinergic.

I actually used diphenhydramine nightly as a sleep aid for a few years while I was in college until a doctor told me to stop, long before I ever talked to a psychiatrist. Oops. It’s probably not a coincidence I ended up on mirtazapine.

reply

herman_toothrot 1 day ago [–]

Have you tried the ketamine treatment?

reply

nnq 1 day ago [9 more]

tw000001 1 day ago [–]

I don't think these drugs should be scheduled but here's a perspective that you're less likely to find online: I would never put myself in a position to be indoctrinated by the modern ideologically slanted American psychological establishment while my guard is down, so to speak.

These kinds of drugs also make people extremely open to suggestion. It's one reason why they are used in, say, cults. We are raised to believe in the authority of institutions and the conditioning is so powerful that when most people read any media that seems authoritative (news, books, Wikipedia, etc) unless they are specifically suspicious of the source, there is rarely an innate drive to question the content. This is especially true of how people treat advice from doctors. Now combine that with alkaloids which directly inhibit neural circuits related to suspicion and defense.

You may agree with the tenets of modern western society now, but it's clear that they have a checkered history (e.g. lobotomy, forced sterilization) and no doubt we will look back on some of today's practices with the same horror (sterilization and genital mutilation for gender dysphoria, for example)...

Point being, anyone undergoing such a treatment should be aware that they are effectively handing over their psyche to another human being who is inevitably influenced in some way by the zeitgeist, and it's hubris to presume that current ideas are correct simply because they are different from ideas past. This is also a potential avenue for mass government indoctrination under the guise of medical treatment. Imagine modern "humane" psychedelic reeducation camps orchestrated by your friendly authoritarian uncle sam!

reply

carapace 1 day ago [–]

Americans take so many prescription drugs that they can be measured in our sewage. https://www.latimes.com/a…

reply

tw000001 1 day ago [–]

Yes, and most of them know next to nothing about the drugs they take beyond what their doctors have told them. I've watched this blind faith harm people dear to me on multiple occasions.

These are the same institutions that failed across the board in preparing for COVID. Their recommendations should be scrutinized.

reply

qntty 1 day ago [–]

You're definitely in a vulnerable and potentially suggestible state when you're on psychedelics, but we all spend the first 12+ years of our lives in a pretty vulnerable and suggestible state, way more so than psychedelics can create. At least you have a little more control over the conditions of your psychedelic time.

reply

tw000001 1 day ago [–]

The first 12 years of your life are spent in the care of (ideally) parents who love you unconditionally and genuinely want you to succeed.

Under psychedelic therapy, you are at the mercy of your therapist. I'm not necessarily saying that these are bad people but a dangerous property of a soft science like psychology is that, in defining what falls within the range of normal the psychological establishment is effectively acting as an arbiter of culture. The particular personality changes that they may collectively recommend won't be necessarily be compatible with one's home culture.

Particularly when you consider that the establishment leans heavily left, meanwhile their views regarding aggression, emotional expression, gender roles, etc are fundamentally in conflict with many core tenants on the right. Learning to be less aggressive or more emotional can put you at a social disadvantage in other societies. Laypeople treat psychology as though its conclusions are as rigorous as physics but that's pure hubris - as evidenced by the thousands of successful cultures around the world with totally different approaches to many of the same issues.

reply

qntty 1 day ago [–]

Hmm I guess this a there's a lot to say about this. I'll just say two things. One, that most people (including maybe you) are more messed up than they think from childhood. Secondly, (and this is an even bigger issue) there's really no reason to worry about left-wing ideology putting you at a disadvantage socially. The left wouldn't be adopting these more "progressive" identities if they weren't socially advantageous within the social circles of the most powerful people in our society. It's true that being "soft" can be a disadvantage in a small rural area, but this will never be the case again among the American elite. You have to justify your dominance of the peasants somehow, and one way they do it is proving that they are more "evolved" than others.

reply

uncle_iroh 1 day ago [–]

OK cool. Michael Pollan and friends have me convinced, but where do I get psychedelics? I'm not a cool kid, don't have cool friends, and live in the midwest. I think my neighbors a few houses down sell drugs...

reply

leetcrew 1 day ago [–]

I kinda get the impression this isn't a serious comment, but this is an active area of research. you're best bet might be to see if any trials are being conducted near you and try to sign up. this way you're not doing anything illegal, and they might even pay you.

reply

uncle_iroh 1 day ago [–]

Not meant to be sarcastic, just failingly self-deprecating. Thank you for the direction

reply

tayo42 1 day ago [–]

Buy them online, if you found hacker news, I'm sure you're smart enough to figure out how to do it safely

Edit:forgot to mention mushroom spores are legal in most states, fun enough experiment to grow a personal dose

reply

h2odragon 1 day ago [–]

Growing mushrooms is a great variant of indoor gardening. Its worth the effort to step up to pressure canning gear but it isn't *necessary* for good results. Even total failures are interestingly colorful and "gee what's that" chances to meet new lifeforms.

reply